

T H E S O W E R.

BEING THE
S U B S T A N C E
O F A
D I S C O U R S E

DELIVERED IN THE
County of Antrim in Ireland.

In the YEAR 1748.

By J O H N C E N N I C K.

I have used similitudes. Hof. xii. 10.

The wise shall understand. Dan. xii. 10.

T H E F I F T H E D I T I O N.

L O N D O N:

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THE SOWER.

MARK iv. 9.

“He that hath ears to hear let him hear.”

THESE words were spoken by our Saviour with particular emphasis, after he had ended the parable of the sower, and because of his speaking thus the disciples prayed with him when he was alone to unfold and explain what the parable meant, as well as that manner of speaking, “He that hath ears to hear let him hear,” for hitherto they were unacquainted with both. Our Saviour then told them, that he must use similitudes, according to the prophecy, and speak in parables to such as were without, or unconverted, and not brought into the fold; but blesses their eyes because, he saith, they see, and their ears for they hear; and meekly vouchsafed to open the whole before them, and to teach them, that although a man may have outward eyes, yet as long as he is not enlightened from above, he is blind and does not see, and though he have ears, and is not taught of the Father in his heart, he does not hear; therefore he said, “He that hath ears to hear let him hear.” He whose ears my Father hath opened to the gospel

of salvation, who is awakened, and wants to understand the mysteries of the kingdom, let him hear; to him is this message, to him are sent the words of this salvation.

Perhaps it would not be amiss for me to speak a little more of this matter, and give some reasons why our Lord Christ in the days of his flesh chose to speak in similitudes, and to deliver his doctrine in parables; and why, after his resurrection the apostles did quite otherwise, and spoke so plainly the gospel, without using the Jewish figures or shadows, or the dark speeches or parables.

The reasons may be reduced to these two; First, because (till the death of Christ, who was the true Lamb, and that offering which was so long looked for to take away the iniquity of the land in one day) the Mosaical or Jewish dispensation did not cease; and as the whole of that dispensation was a sort of parable, a shadow of good things to come, and not the very substance, and as the prophets had used similitudes, and God had spoke to them very commonly in that way, which every one may see who reads the scripture; so Jesus, the Head of all their goodly company, continued to speak in the same way, till the veil should be rent in twain in his flesh, and a way be opened thereby into the holy of holies by his blood. Hence it is that our Saviour seemed to speak plainly of his kingdom and salvation so seldom, and then only to his children and disciples, as it is written, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to others it is not given," Matt. xiii. 11. This went so far, that it should have seemed as if he only preached to the elect of Israel, and spoke therefore in such a manner as if none should understand him but those whom his Father drew to him

him and enlightened. This appears more likely when we find our Saviour so charge his disciples, not to go to the Gentiles, nor enter the villages even of the Samaritans, though they were of the family of Abraham. This made so many expressions of our Saviour seem as if he only had regard to such as the Father had given him before all worlds, and endeavour, as it were, to hide the gospel from the rest; and on a too hasty conclusion of this sort many have been rash, and maintained very hot and lamentable disputes about election, of which, no doubt, they will one day be ashamed, having not understood the mystery of God; how he secretly proposed not only to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel, but to give our Saviour for a light to the Gentiles, and his salvation to the ends of the earth, Isa. xlix. 6. However, so much must be allowed, that our Saviour's discourse at Nazareth, his charge to his disciples, his saying, "No man cometh to me except my Father draw him," as well as his last prayer in the xviith of St. John's gospel, prove his peculiar care of those who came to him out of Israel; but then he adds, "When I am lifted up, then I will draw all men after me: I can quicken whom I will;" and accordingly we see how he commands the same disciples, whom he had before forbid to go to the Samaritans or Gentiles, now to preach the gospel to every creature, and promises, I will stand by you, I will be with you to the end of the world. But, as I said before, till by his death he had made the world his own again, he spake in parables after the Jewish manner, and left it over to his Father to give ears to hear and a heart to understand, and pronounces those blessed who did hear and understand him,

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The other reason for his doing this, was, that whoever would understand him might come and ask him privately; and hereby we may learn, that whatever appears dark to us in the scripture, or hidden, or like a parable, in the doctrine of our Saviour, will always remain so, unless he by his Holy Spirit clear it to us; he must anoint our eyes with his eye-salve, if we would see; he must touch our ears, and say Ephatha, i. e. be opened, if we would hear and live. May his parable have that effect upon us, that we may daily enquire of him the true meaning, and so be taught of God and be wise in his sight, that he may say to us, "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear," what kings and righteous men and prophets have desired to see and have not seen; even the days of the Son of Man and his salvation clearly that you see, and what they wished to hear of the plain and pure gospel of his free grace and redemption, but did not hear, that ye hear. Nor may any helpful to us, or what concerns our eternal happiness, be sealed up or hid from us; rather may we have ears to hear, and a heart to understand, that we may be converted and be saved, and escape every evil in time and eternity!

I come now to speak of the parable itself, with the meaning of it, as our Saviour has been pleased to explain it to his disciples.

He saith, "A sower went out to sow his seed, and some fell by the way-side," that is, upon the road, upon the path whereon people go, and which is hard and unbroken, and this was partly trodden down and destroyed by such as went that way, and the rest the fowls of the air, that in such cases sit watching upon the neighbouring trees and hedges, devoured as soon as the sower was gone. A second parcel

parcel of seed fell upon stony ground, or as St. Luke describes it, upon a rock, where it had not much deepness of earth, nor moisture; and this, though it sprung up, when the sun arose and shone hot upon it, because it had no depth for its root, nor moisture, withered away. A third part fell among thorns, that is, in the hedges and among the weeds and briars; and this either rotted and came to nothing, or else what sprung up was soon choaked with the thorns that came up with it, that it bore no fruit. The fourth part fell upon the good ground, namely, upon the land tilled and ploughed for that purpose; here no traveller's feet trod it down, it was soon harrowed in by the husbandman, so that the fowls could not devour it; the hardness and stony nature was removed, the ground manured and made good, so that it could take deep root downward and bear fruit upward, and not easily be blown up with high winds, nor scorched up with the sun; there was no thorns nor weeds to choke it, "but it brought forth some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold."

I reverence always and adore our Saviour, whenever I read or hear his parables; for though he was the God of wisdom, and knew all the sciences and arts from everlasting, yet in his preaching a peasant can understand and comprehend as well as the most learned philosopher. When he would liken the kingdom of God, or compare it to earthly things, his likenesses are plain and easy, suited to the meanest capacity; and though the learned and understanding part of mankind have formerly done it, and may yet dare to despise his manner of preaching, his parables, and mean comparisons, yet shall it appear the wisdom of God, in that day, when he shall shew "how he has chosen the weak things,
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and base, and things that are despised, to bring to nought the pride of man and the haughtiness of the world, and reveal to babes and foolish what is hid even from the wise and prudent."

How many of you that hear me have read this scripture, as well as others of the like nature, and thought no farther about it? How have you had ears, but would not hear what the Lord would hereby say to you? Now I pray you to give attention, and O may God so open the ears of all your hearts that you may henceforth hear and live!

The sower is properly the Son of Man; he is the chief Minister, the first and principal Labourer and Husbandman in all God's vineyard; but in some respects every minister of Jesus Christ is a sower, and so sows the good seed out of the treasure of his heart, in all places wheresoever he comes.

"The seed is the word of God," which Jesus himself first gave and preached in the world, and with which now his ministers are commissioned, who are sowers of the seed of eternal life.

"The ground is the heart," whereon the seed is sown.

"Those who receive the seed by the way side," are the careless and light-minded, who hear the gospel, and are as unconcerned as if they heard some idle tale: Their ears are open to every merry story, to all curious accounts, to every foolish song, but deaf to the words of the Saviour, "as the deaf adder, which refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely." These are they whose hearts were never broken, or concerned about eternal life, and least the preaching of the gospel, the love of Christ, or the promises in his word should have any effect upon them, the devils watch, like the fowls of the air, lest if in
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reading the scripture, or under some discourse, they should appear at all affected, to steal away the very remembrance of it, and get perhaps some pleasant company to divert or laugh away their devout thoughts; some play, or dress, or romance must amuse them; some diversion or pleasure must raise their spirits, or drinking or feasting overcharge their hearts, and drown all the least stirrings of grace, and so the preacher sows and preaches in vain, and they receive it by the way side in vain. O think to yourselves, Am not I the man? Have not I so heard and received the seed all my life time? And has not the devil always found means to make all the gospel to me nothing, and blinded and hardened my heart to all the loving intreaties of the Lamb of God, and hid, as it were, his blood and gospel from me? O pray our Saviour to drive away the fowls, and command the nest of every unclean and hateful bird to keep off, that you may once hear in faith the words of God, and be saved.

But no doubt there are many here who will not reckon themselves among this sort: You perhaps have had a respect for the Bible, have been educated religiously, and gone strictly to church or meeting, done a great deal of good, &c. and after all may have been of that sort who receive the seed upon a rock, and upon stony ground. Those that fall under this blame are such as hear the word with joy; they may be so affected that they may think "never man spake like this Man;" they may go and call others, be very industrious to bring many to hear the gospel, and would not miss the hearing the word of God upon any account. They are such as frequent all religious places and company, read all pious books, receive the sacrament, and be diligent in many good works, but have still a heart of adamant, a heart like

the nether mill-stone: They have never known what it was to melt before the blood and dying of Jesus, nor to be like wax before the fire of his burnt-offering. Our Saviour saith, the word in such springs up directly, but when the sun is up, in a time of heat, they wither away, because they have no depth, nor moisture; by this he means, they have no root in themselves, they have no inward experience of the love of God, nor have any more than a superficial joy, a flame like the foolish virgins' lamps, that soon goes out for lack of oil, and when affliction, or temptation, or persecution arises, because of the word, by and by they are offended: They like the doctrine of Christ, and seem to begin well, but by and by one of their old companions mocks them, or their masters, benefactors, and parents threaten them, people of fashion are ashamed of them, and ten thousand things war with them on account of their being disposed for eternal life, and so they by little and little, are offended; and since their hearts have never been softened and made tender by the blood and sufferings of Christ, at last all their good desires languish and wither, and in a short time they are again in the world as deceived as ever. O hear this, my dear brethren, (and call an assize in your own breast, | judge yourselves in this weighty matter, and ask your own heart, Am I not one of these? People who are hereby meant are in many dangers; first, from a hard heart; secondly, from being ashamed of our Saviour; and, thirdly, from a fear of man.

By a hard heart I mean what is described in Ezekiel, as a heart of stone. A man may be found in all the doctrines of the scripture in his head; he may have been very strict in what men call duty; he may have a glorious name in the world, and be looked upon as half a saint, be a great disputant for religion, and after all have a heart like a flint-stone,
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and like a rock, so that all the preaching of the cros, all the love of our Saviour, has to this day had no effect upon it: They have hitherto patched up a religion of their own making, and are really and truly dead as a stone to the merits of Jesus Christ, quite cold to his loving heart, and without the least inward acquaintance with him. Should you feel, and think, this is my case, so it is with my heart, then behold there is a remedy.

“In Jesu’s blood a healing pow’r doth dwell,
Enough to melt the hardest heart in hell.”

He only is the good husbandman, and can turn the wilderness into the garden of God, the flint-stone into a springing well. He only knows how to melt and soften the most stupid and hardened state, and turn the heart of stone into a heart of flesh. Turn ye to him, and learn what Job saith, “It is God that maketh my heart soft;” or the spouse in Solomon’s song, “My soul melted while my Beloved spake,” Cant. v. 6. He that spake to the rock in the wilderness, when the waters gushed out, he alone can make you right, dissolve the ice and coldness in your hearts, “and make the rocks flow at his presence.” Be your hearts never so stupid, hard, and stubborn, be your hearts ever so cold or frozen, one drop of the blood he shed will make it happy and tender, and kindle such a flame of divine love there, as “many waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown.” Come ye then, come ye to these waters, and you shall be eternally saved, and out of all danger on this account.

But there is yet another danger, and that is, being ashamed of Christ and his gospel. This has gone far with some poor people, they could not

follow Jesus out of the camp bearing his reproach, but rather than be mocked, or laughed at, or counted a fool, they have by and by been seduced from following the Lamb. Our Saviour has said positively, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he comes with his Father's glory, and with the holy angels."

You know how far it went with Peter in this respect; he had continued several years a close disciple and follower of our Saviour, till that night when Jesus was arraigned, and then he was really ashamed, and was got warming himself by the fire. He had no business either in the place or in the company, and this became the sad occasion of his fall; for when a silly maid made her game, and called him a disciple of Christ, he denied it, and at last swore he did not know him. How far it would have gone with him I do not know, if Jesus had not turned and looked upon him, and then "he went out and wept bitterly;" nor did he ever rest till Jesus rose from the dead and pardoned him.

As long as the doctrines and gospel of our Saviour pass unmolested in the world, in a town, or country, it is easy to go among his people; but when it becomes scandalous, when men raise ten thousand lies and slanders upon it and its professors, when none but fools, low-lived people, and mad persons are said to be its abettors, then many are offended, and they are really ashamed of their Lord Christ. But methinks I hear some say, O no; God forbid that I should be ashamed of Christ. I hope one may go to heaven without making oneself ridiculous, without all this to do. I am not ashamed of the word of God, but only I have no mind to be a fool,

fool. Sure if I keep to my place of worship, and do my duty in a creditable way, I shall be accepted. Whoever you are that so reason, take care; I am afraid if the carpenter's Son was now in the flesh among us, and went about with a few poor fishermen and women, you would despise his meanness; should you hear his plain simple discourses, which all men derided, you would be ashamed, and walk no more with him. If you are upright, then do not care if heaven and earth laugh you to scorn; be content to be slighted, abused, scorned, and count it an honour to suffer shame for his name sake. Stay a little while and you will see who will have reason to be ashamed; not the souls who have followed the Lamb, who have put on his righteousness, and obtained of him the Spirit of adoption, these shall not be ashamed; but those shall be ashamed who have not his white raiment, who were once too wise, too prudent, too proud to be his disciples. The Lord grant you may escape this danger, that ye may be worthy to stand before the Son of man.

There is yet another danger which those people are in, and that is, when persecution ariseth because of the word. Some despise the shame, and in a philosophical spirit disregard it, but when the persecution comes, when the parents will disown the children, the master turn away his servants, the trader refuse to buy or sell with you, when threatenings, ill words, blows, disinheriting, and danger of losing a good deal comes, those who before withstood other opposition, now yield, and satan gains his point. The blessed awakening ceases, the love of the word of God is stifled, and the soul turns to the world, and chuses its portion in this life. Would to God such people would think of
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“ what advantage would it be to them to gain all the world and lose their own souls?” Or how could they bear to hear our Saviour say to them in that day, “ Ye loved the world, your riches, your company better than me,” or be put in mind, “ Remember, when a little storm arose on my account ye forsook me and fled.” May this also not happen to us! May this, O God, be far from us all! But here, before I conclude this part of my discourse, let me ask, Why is it that souls can be swayed by such things? How is it a person who is disposed to be saved can be turned out of the way and be offended? It is really because their hearts were never made tender by the blood of Jesus, they wanted a thorough awakening there. Had they ever once seen how God purchased them with his own blood, how he valued and loved them, even so as to die for them; had his love ever melted their hearts, or had they any depth of love to him and his merits; had they ever felt deeply his sword, like a plough-shear, break up the fallow ground, and pierce into the bottom of their corrupt and spoiled nature, so that they were deeply sensible of their want, their great need of our Saviour’s wounds and sufferings to make them whole, they would not, they could not have been turned from him by any means; all shame and opposition, all losses and threatenings would be welcome to them, and the sword, and fire, and prison, or whatever hell or wicked men could devise, would be very little, so they might but get or win Jesus Christ. O pray ye, that our compassionate Saviour may break the rock of your hearts in pieces, and give you a new heart and a new spirit, and save you from receiving any longer the seed upon stony ground.

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"Those that receive the seed among thorns," our Saviour says, "are such as hear the word, but the deceitfulness of riches, the cares of this world, and pleasures of this life, mingle with it and choke it, so that it bears no fruit, but is lost."

How many are there in the world who easily perceive how dangerous a careless and giddy mind is; how bad a condition their's is also, where the heart is like a rock, and where shame and persecution have so great sway and influence, but never dream of their own cares, pleasures, or love of money; whereas, dear me! these are in equal danger with them.

I will speak first to you, ye over and above careful people; you who can rise early and late to get the common bread, and provide treasure upon earth; ye cumbered Marthas, who are always busy and industrious, but forget "the one thing needful, the good part which shall not be taken away."

To what purpose are ye so full of cares and thoughts? Why do you eat the bread of carefulness, and neglect the true Bread that came down from heaven, and that raiment which should make you all glorious within, clean and white, ready for the marriage of the Lamb?

Ye know the persons who made their excuses for not coming to the supper of the King's Son, were of your sort; "one had bought oxen and must prove them, another had purchased land and must see it, another was engaged in his farm, another busy in his trade and merchandise, and yet another was married, had a wife and children to provide for, and so prayed to be excused;" but hear only the answer of the King, when the servants returned
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and told him, he said, "Not one of them shall taste of my supper." Let me advise you a little: Henceforth be industrious and diligent, but only do not forget that you are servants, and not masters. Look upon all you have as if it was not yours, but your Master Christ's. Let losses or disappointments happen, place it to his account, and take you thought about the living Bread, that is, Christ's flesh, and the living water, that is, his blood. Make it sure to you that you have a part in these, and that Jesus has prepared a place in his Father's house, and you shall be happy. Ye who have been like Martha, be now like Mary, and sit down at Jesus's feet, and "hearken and learn of him, and you shall find rest to your busy and careful souls." It is not your having a family to provide for, a farm, a trade, your being a dealer, a master or a servant, a husband or wife, a child or parent, that can hinder you to be saved, if your heart be but right. But as the garden brings up weeds, as it were, of itself, which would choke what is sown therein, if it be not kept weeded, so are our hearts; there is sin enough to render all the good seed sown there in vain, unless Jesus's eyes of fire try our hearts, and burn up all the useless and worldly cares, and those sins which else choke his word and make it unfruitful.

I will speak also to you who are cheated with the deceitfulness of riches, who perhaps never once in your life thought there was any danger in being rich, but have wished for it with all your hearts. Our Saviour has wisely called it the deceitfulness of riches, because such it really is, and no other. The poor cheat themselves in hoping to become rich, and those who have this world deceive themselves, and imagine themselves wealthy, and having
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much, and have not yet got the least spark of the love of God shed abroad in their hearts. They do not know that they have any part in the kingdom of God, or in the gold tried in the fire, which is the righteousness and merits of Christ Jesus. O such, with all they have, are poor and miserable. What good did all the rich man's barns full of corn and plenty, and his bags and chests of gold do him, when God called him, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee?" Or of what use was it to Belshazar that he could feast with all his nobles, and eat and drink out of bowls of silver and gold, when the same night a hand-writing upon the wall tells him, "His kingdom is given away from him, and he is weighed in the balances and found wanting?" Or of what comfort was it to Dives, that just before he had been cloathed in scarlet, and purple, and fine linen, and fared sumptuously or delicately every day, and now must lift up his eyes in the torment of hell, and want a drop of water to cool his tongue? They were deceived with the deceitfulness of riches, and forgot how hard it was for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. But whoever among you have hitherto been mistaken, hear me a little: Are you poor now? then learn to be content, and seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and you shall be rich. Mind it not, though here you may be a vessel of dishonour, like Lazarus, only let our dear Saviour be your sure portion; lay up treasure in heaven, get your part ascertained in his merits and atonement, and indeed you shall be rich, you shall have a kingdom that cannot be removed, and be yourselves upon the throne of God, kings and priests to the Lamb for ever. Are you rich? Have you much of this world? then be faithful stewards, and cast your bread upon the waters, that you may find

it again? and let it be your chief, your only study, to ensure your interest in Christ, and lay hold on eternal life. Do not look upon yourselves as better than others, nor value a possession which in one hour may leave you destitute as a beggar: be rich in faith, in love, and good works, in all other respects be poor, and as one that needs the precious blood of the Lamb, and his salvation and pardon daily and hourly; so lie at his gate, like Lazarus, full of sores, and desire to be fed with the crumbs which fall from his table; and resolve to continue a poor despised disciple of your despised Master, and come follow him, and you shall be rich, "you shall have treasure in heaven, raiment and jewels which no moth or rust can corrupt, and gold which no thief can break through and steal;" and when you must go hence, and be no more seen, though you can carry nothing with you of all your goods or temporal blessings, you shall be received by "the King of kings and Lord of lords" into the New Jerusalem, and go no more out. O may our merciful Lord and Saviour, in this sense, make us rich for his name's sake!

I must yet speak to one sort of people more, whose hearts have received the word of God among thorns; and these are those who are led away with the pleasures of this life. I fear many who hear me are of this poor deceived number. Many live ten, twenty, thirty years in the world, and perhaps their whole life, and never knew that what they call their innocent mirth, lawful recreations, and harmless pleasures, have been the very thorns which have choaked the word. But let me reason with you also a little, for else I should be inexcusable. I know what the pleasures of this life are; they are what St. Paul calls "the pleasures of sin for a season,"

son," and such as Moses left in the court of Pharaoh for Christ's sake. They are like Job's friends, miserable comforters indeed. In vain does one dress when his poor soul is naked, and ashamed before God; in vain he decks his body, when his spirit is without the righteousness of faith, and the beauty and comeliness which our Saviour puts on a soul, when he washes it and adorns it for the eternal bride-chamber; however he may amuse himself thus a little, his naked estate and vile heart must sometimes appear before him, and make him trembling think, Who knows but this painted and decorated wretch may ere long be summoned into eternity? And this deforms and fullies all his gaiety and finery. In vain another runs to the play-house, or visits some place of diversion and pastime; a guilty mind and conscience must sometimes speak, and turn all their best sweets to gall and wormwood. In vain a third keeps company, and with unlawful and wanton looks, airs, and words, stirs up the lustful fire; it shall be like a vulture at the heart. A dread unspeakable succeeds close at the heels of such delights, a horror like the shadow of death, and secret remorse and stings plague the breast where such fires burn, and all are like the book John eat, however sweet it is in the mouth, in the belly shall it be very bitter. In vain a fourth feasts, and drinks new wine and strong drink, or sings away his days, or with riding, walking, hunting, or play, thinks to make himself happy; the wisest of all men tried all these things, and got all the delights of the sons of men, and at last confessed, what we all know to be true, "In the midst of laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness;" and a wiser man than Solomon hath said, "Wo be to them

that laugh now, for they shall mourn and weep." But why is it that souls are so bewitched and allured? Why are the greatest part of mankind so deceived? The old serpent that deceives all them that dwell on the earth has persuaded them, that else they shall always be mopes, and melancholy in the world; nor have they understood that "the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace" Ye foolish people, if ye did but know how really fine, and like a bride prepared for the bridegroom, a soul is who has put on the Lord Jesus, ye would slight heartily all other finery for evermore. Come and be embraced one moment by the Friend of sinners, and receive his pardon, and nothing would so affect you for ever, nothing so please you as the tragedy of the Son of David, his tears and heaviness should always keep you chearful, and his bitterness of soul, when he felt the sting of death, would be your hourly happiness and joy.

Ye wanton and lustful men and women come ye to Gethsemane, and see those cold drops of sweat which fell down to the ground like blood from the holy One, this shall root out, and extinguish, and wash away for ever all the impure flames which have so racked your mind, and exposed you to the most horrible dread on this side eternity. Our Saviour pities you, and is ready to save you from all your sins. There is no lust, no unholy and wild fire, no cursed inbred lechery, and whorish and unclean thought or wish which his blood and death-sweat cannot utterly abolish and drown. If you knew in what safety they dwell, with what peace they go forward, and how calm and undisturbed they are who are saved and made chaste, and washed white in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, you would not once more look back, or desire again

again to be entangled in the old sins; no, you would bless the Lamb day and night who had delivered you and saved you from so great misery and danger. Ye drunkards and rioters, ye lovers of feasting and banqueting, come ye to the marriage-feast of the Lamb. Jesus invites you to drink freely of the fountain of life, and to eat of the hidden manna. Ye who are fond of music, come and hearken to our Saviour, for his voice is sweet; all the music of the angels is nothing else but the echo of his love and forgiveness. Do you love a concert, come up and you shall see ten thousand harping upon their harps before the Lamb that was slain, and millions of trumpets blowing to the honour of his name. Do ye esteem songs? O get but your lips touched with a coal from off the altar, and you shall join in the song of Moses and the Lamb upon mount Zion. If that mouth which was once struck by the soldiers, kiss you and seal your pardon, the songs of the drunkards will no more be pleasing, nor the shouts of such as make merry; you will feel a joy which they understand not, and your lips shall utter a song which shall please your Beloved, and be the language of a heart that has overcome and obtained mercy in God our Saviour. You shall be happy witnesses that our Redeemer's service is perfect freedom, and that his children are the only happy people in the world. No secret misgivings check their joys, not fears of an unexpected summons to another world; no shuddering at the approach of judgment, nor stings of a guilty conscience, interrupt their bliss, or hinder their real peace. No, they have our Saviour with them, they foretaste the pleasures of his right hand, and are happy, quite happy in his everlasting arms, and in his wounds, like doves in the clefts of the rock. O that all here were thus blessed,

blessed, and had the Lord for their God, and in him were thus blessed and saved.

I come now, in the last place, to speak of such as receive the seed in good ground; and these are such as hear the gospel and receive it in an honest and good heart, in a heart sincerely desirous to be saved and made right in our Saviour's sight. These hear the promises, and with all diligence, tears, and prayers, expect and look for the fulfilling of them; and who cannot rest till they have found redemption in the blood of Christ, his righteousness and salvation, and have his holy Spirit apply his bruises to their pained hearts, to ease them with the full assurance of their part in the book of life, and of their place being prepared in heaven. As ground tilled and opened receives in the seed, and it springs up and bears fruit, so such people have their hearts truly awakened and opened, to receive the seed of eternal life. No waiting enemy steals away the words of our Saviour; like Mary, they ponder them in their hearts, and keep them as the most precious treasure, and shall bring that blessing down upon them, "Because thou hast kept my word, I will keep thee in the day that shall try all them that dwell upon the earth, thou shalt not die, thou shalt not taste of death." No unbrokenness and hardness hinders our Saviour to see of his travail in them and be satisfied: No shame of the cross, no fear of men, nor cares of the world, nor deceitfulness of riches, nor pleasures of this life hinder them to bring forth fruit to the glory of the good Husbandman. They love our Saviour, with all their heart, they are honest, and would not deceive themselves; but till they had found our Saviour, and were sealed by him to everlasting life, never would be easy; and now he that smote them with the sword
of

of his mouth has healed them; now they have obtained the privilege or power to become sons of God; they are saved, they have found the merits and righteousness of our dear Saviour; they are assured of his favour, they are written in his book, and wait the time of their dissolution with patience, or, as our Saviour says, "bring forth fruit with patience;" their fruit is all good works, but especially praise and love to that Lamb, the good Sower, who first loved them and prepared them for himself. These are they who have ears and hear the voice of their Beloved, the voice of the good Shepherd, the Son of man, and have eternal life through his name: "They have eyes and see his salvation, they have honest and good hearts, and understand and are converted." May our Lord God and Saviour make you of this happy number. Amen.

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